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Chapter 24
黒の探偵
くろのたんてい

Case.24 [A Noble's Duty]

SEE YOU NEXT TIME~
CREAK
THANK YOU FOR THE MEAL~
TYPE
TYPE
TYPE
CCCN

NICK BATON. UNEMPLOYED. KIDNAPPER AND MURDERER. "DIED NATURALLY".
JESSICA SUMMERS. BABY SITTER. ILL-TREATMENT OF INFANTS. "DIED FROM FALLING".
RICHARD HEIMZ. GOVERNMENT WORKER. MURDERER WHO POISONED INDISCRIMINATELY. "SUICIDE WITH POISON".
HMM...
AMAZINGLY, WITH NO EVIDENCE.
THERE'S DOZENS OF RELATED CASES...

CASES RELATED TO THE EARL?
CASES THAT SEEM TO BE...
IT SEEMS LIKE HE SOMETHING LIKE AN ALLY OF JUSTICE, HUH.
HUH...
A SERIAL KILLER HAS THE IMAGE OF KILLING INDISCRIMINATELY BUT,
YEAH... I GUESS.
BECAUSE HE'S A CRIMINAL, HE DOESN'T NEED A GOOD REASON FOR KILLING.

TAP
TAP
IT STARTED BECAUSE OF AN INCIDENT THAT INVOLVED HIM.
IT SEEMS HE WAS A DETECTIVE WITH A SIDE JOB AS AN OFFICIAL COUNSELOR, BUT...
BUT WASN'T THE EARL A DETECTIVE? WHAT WOULD MAKE HIM KILL...?
HIGHSCHOOL STUDENT, PATRICK BROWN
HE ACCIDENTALLY KILLED HIS OWN BROTHER WITH A GUN.
THIS FAMILY WAS...
HOWEVER, SHORTLY AFTER THAT, A RELATED FAMILY WAS SLAUGHTERED.
THE CASE AND THE VERDICT WAS DECLARED NOT GUILTY.
Not guilty

The Ashford Family.
The Earl's parents and younger sister.
HUH ...!?
THAT BOY SHOT HIMSELF IN THE HEAD AT THE SCENE DUE TO HIS INSANITY.
...IS WHAT IT SAYS, BUT...

PERHAPS THAT WAS THE EARL'S FIRST VICTIM.
REVENGE FOR HIS FAMILY...?
NATURALLY THE POLICE THOUGHT THIS AS WELL, BUT,
THEY WERE UNABLE TO FIND ANY EVIDENCE THAT HE DID.
THE EARL HAD THAT SORT OF PAST...
CLOSE
ALTHOUGH I DO FEEL SYMPATHY FOR HIM, I CAN'T APPROVE OF IT.
AH! MISTER! HOW'S MY COFFEE COMING ALONG?

DON'T YOU THINK YOUR CUSTOMER SERVICE IS A BIT BAD?
THANKS FOR WAITING
Clang
DID YOU REALLY JUST COME HERE JUST TO MOCK ME!?
WHAT DID YOU COME FOR?
"WHAT"? FOOD OBVIOUSLY.
Are you an idiot?
U-UMM ...
WE JUST THOUGHT WE WOULD VISIT YOU BEFORE WE GO INVESTIGATE...

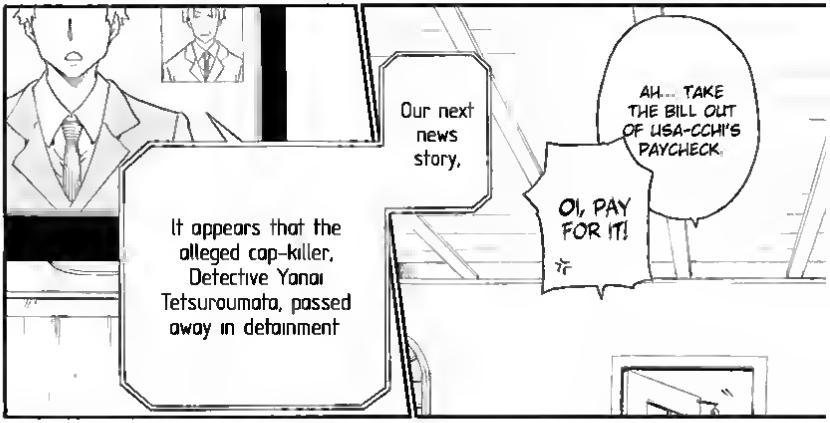
SPEAKING OF THE INVESTIGATION, WHAT'S THE CASE?
THAT'S NOT IT.
...I SEE.
I'M WORKING ...
BEEP
BEEP
IT'S THE TRANSMITTER I STUCK TO THE EARL, BUT...
IT HASN'T MOVED SINCE YESTERDAY.
WHERE IS IT?
BUT THE SANZEN HOUSE IS IN A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LOCATION.
A RESIDENTIAL AREA OUTSIDE OF TOWN.

DID HE NOTICE?
WHAT ABOUT THE VOICE?
IT'S INTER-RUPTED.
MAYBE.
A TRAP...
IT HAS TO BE.
WHAT?
HUH!?
A-ANY-WAY!
HUH? IF I'M NOT THERE YOU GET SCARED, HUH?
THAT'S WHAT I THOUGHT TOO, SO I CAME TO BRING YOU ALONG.
NO, YOU'RE GOING TO BE MY SHIELD.

DESPITE WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE, WE'RE GOING TO GO CHECK IT OUT.
WE CAME TO LET YOU KNOW IN CASE YOU GET WORRIED.
AH... IS THAT IT? YOU WERE WORRIED THAT I'D BE THE ONE TO DISCOVER YOUR BODIES, HUH?
STOP WITH THE OMINOUS THEORIES!
YEAH, THAT'S WHY I NEED YOU TO BLOCK THE BULLET FOR ME.
GO DIE ALONE!
BOTH OF YOU STOP!!
THEN ISN'T THIS GUY A GOOD TARGET?
I-IT SHOULD BE FINE! THE EARL DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE CRIMINAL WHO WOULD DO THAT.

AL-RIGHT.
LET ME KNOW IF YOU FIND OUT ANYTHING.
THANKS FOR THE MEAL.

ANYWAY, I'M INTERESTED.


Our next news story,
It appears that the alleged cop-killer, Detective Yanai Tetsuroumata, passed away in detainment
AH... TAKE THE BILL OUT OF USA-CCHI'S PAYCHECK.
OI, PAY FOR IT!

It appears the suspect hung himself with his clothes
The police are still looking into this matter

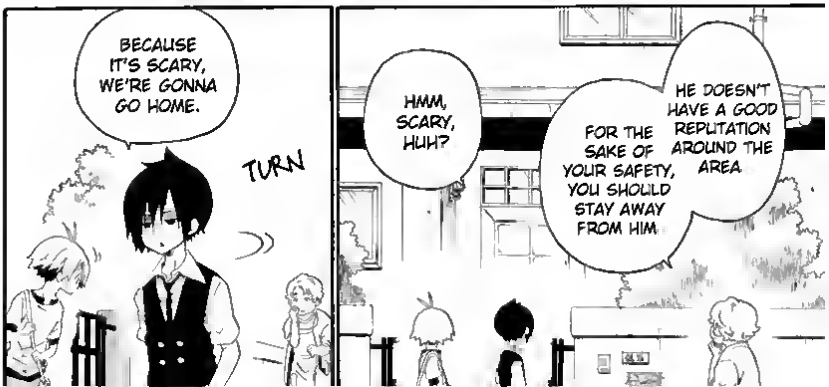
DING DONG
DING DONG
DING DONG
IT LOOKS LIKE NOBODY'S HOME...
I'M CERTAIN THAT THIS IS THE ADDRESS
CREEAK
OH?
DO YOU NEED SOMETHING FROM PROFESSOR SAKUMA?

ARE YOU THE CARE-TAKER?
PROFES-SOR?
ARE YOU STUDENTS OF YAMASEKO?
AH .. NO.
YES? SPEAKING OF THE PROFESSOR, HE HASN'T BEEN AROUND HERE FOR A FEW DAYS.
THERE WAS SOME-THING?
OH, YOU DON'T KNOW?
THEN WHY ON EARTH ARE YOU HERE .
IS THAT SO... ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOMETHING... IT LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE NOT HIS STUDENTS COMING TO VISIT.

OH, SO THAT'S WHY!
WE GOT SAKUMA'S MAIL BY MISTAKE SO WE CAME TO GIVE IT TO HIM.
UHH... WELL
佐熊
YOU SHOULDN'T GET INVOLVED WITH SOMETHING LIKE THIS.
IF THAT'S THE CASE, YOU SHOULD JUST PUT IT IN THE MAILBOX AND GO HOME!
WHISPER
Professor Sakuma has a criminal record!
LEAN
HUH? WHY?

CLAIMING IT AS GUIDANCE, HE LOCKED UP ONE OF HIS STUDENTS.
HE WAS PUT TO JAIL!!

SHORTLY AFTER HIS RELEASE,
HE WAS PROHIBITED FROM THE SCHOOL,
AND HIS WIFE RAN AWAY. LATELY, HE SEEMED TO BE GOING SOMEWHERE AIMLESSLY BY HIMSELF.


HE DOESN'T HAVE A GOOD REPUTATION AROUND THE AREA.
FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR SAFETY, YOU SHOULD STAY AWAY FROM HIM.
HMM, SCARY, HUH?
BECAUSE IT'S SCARY, WE'RE GONNA GO HOME.
TURN

JUMP
STOP
STEP
STEP
KURO-BA!?
ISN'T THE TRANSMITTER SIGNALLING FROM THIS SUSPICIOUS PERSON'S HOUSE?
OF COURSE WE'RE NOT GOING HOME
It's becoming more and more obvious that there's something at work...
Prepare yourself, Toiro.

DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING, TOIRO.
AH... OK
EXCUSE US!
OUR SHOES

WE CAN'T GO ANY FURTHER...
HERE?
A CELLAR?
WHISPER
GET READY TO RUN AWAY.
nod nod
creak

CREAK
!!!?

These are...
stu-dents?
IT'S AWFUL...
GUH—
SAKURA

Claiming it as guidance, he locked up one of his students...
SO THIS IS SAKUMA?
WHAT THE HELL IS THIS...
HAS HE GONE BACK TO CONFINEMENT AGAIN?
AS I THOUGHT, THE EARL WAS HERE ...
The Trans-mitter!!
SWISH

FOR THE SAKE OF REPORTING THIS CASE TO ME, HE PUT IT HERE...?
BUT WHY?
pause
!?
GASP
THIS PLACE ON THE MAP!
NO WAY ...!!

Tenseikai Hospital!
NOW, MY NEXT QUESTION.
"DO YOU OFTEN HEAR NOISE IN YOUR HEAD AND CAN'T SLEEP"?
NO.

"DO YOU FEEL THAT EVERYONE HATES YOU"?
NO.
"CAN YOU HEAR AN UNIDENTIFIABLE VOICE CONDEMNING YOU AND ORDERING YOU"?
NO.
RIDICU-LOUS.
THERE ARE NO MORE QUESTIONS.
THAT'S GOOD.
THEY PROBABLY CAN'T REVEAL WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME FROM THIS SORT OF TEST.

I'VE FOOLED THE STUPID DOCTOR'S EYES, AND SOONER OR LATER, I'LL ESCAPE THIS PLACE.
GOOD WORK TODAY.
THIS TIME, I'LL ROB YOU OF YOUR SPECIAL PERSON.
AND THEN, KUROBA.
Grip
Smirk
THE FLOWERS THAT GLOOMY WOMAN YUKIME OR SOMETHING BROUGHT.
AHH...
HUH? THESE ARE SOME BEAUTIFUL FLOWERS.

IT'S A GIFT AN ACQUAINTANCE ALWAYS BRINGS.
FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME.
I'M THANKFUL.
...EVEN THOUGH I SAY THAT...
ISN'T THAT NICE! A GIRLFRIEND?
N... NO.
flomp
SWISH
roll roll
!

THE SOUND OF... A PEN.
SNATCH
WHAT A NICE SMELL.
TRUTHFULLY, IT'S UNFORTUNATE.
HUH?
tap
WHAT A GOOD FRIEND TO BRING YOU THIS, HUH?
YEAH.

Rei Tsukishiro.
You can't fool me.
"No room for rehabilitation".

AND THE SIGN OF A SECOND OFFENCE.
YOU'RE SHIFTING YOUR GAZE, YOUR WORD'S INTONATION.
It's unfortu-nate, but,
you can no longer be rescued.
WHO ...
ARE YOU?

WHO...?
I'm a Criminal Psychology Counselor.
I am Asa Ashford.
Who are you?
I...
I...
I didn't mean to do it!!!

I only meant to intimidate him...
The rifle...
I'm sorry.
How did it come to this...
I believe...
I'm sorry.

I believe you.
BANG

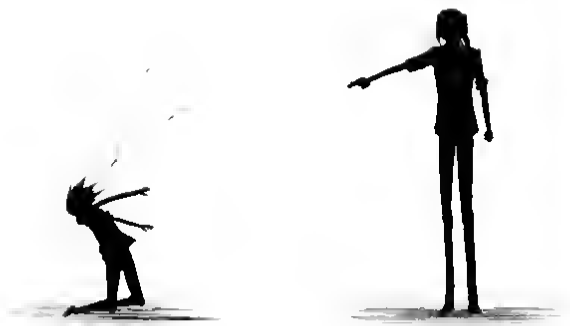
y...
It's not my fault...
You're wrong...
It's not my fault...
You can't control yourself!

It's not your fault.
Ah... You're right.
No matter what I do to a person that can't be rescued, they still can't be rescued.
I couldn't see through my responsibility.

I...

That's all there is to it.

should have believed that in the beginning.



You're someone who can't be healed in a hospital.
If I leave it as is, the number of victims will increase.
Even if I become the same evil as you.
So I have to stop it here.

"A Noble's Duty."
That's the duty I bear.

YOU CAN'T GO IN THERE!!!
tap
tap
tap
W-WAIT, YOU GUYS!!!
ダ tap
ダ tap
ダ tap
ダ tap
バン SLAM
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, EMER-GENCY ...
IT'S AN EMER-GENCY!!!
IF THAT'S THE CASE THEN COME WITH ME!!!
IT'S FORBID-DEN FOR SOMEONE WHO ISN'T RELATED TO BE HERE...

SHIT... WE'RE TOO LATE ...!!
THE IMPORTANT THING YOU HAD TO DO UP UNTIL NOW...

WAS TO KILL!?
EARL!!!